

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

The claims have been amended to recite laundry detergent compositions – claim 15 is the sole independent claim. The claims have also been amended to recite the presence of the binder as taught by specification at the top of page 5.

It is respectfully submitted that the amended claims distinguish more clearly over the cited art. The present inventors have surprisingly found that an effervescent granule which comprises an acid source and a carbonate source together with a quantity of solid surfactant particles provides an effervescent granule with improved dispensing properties, improved structure and a rich foaming visual signal which provides a strong positive connotation in the mind of the end user. See page 3, lines 7 – 13 of the specification. In order to enhance the fizzing action and to provide a positive cue for the end user, the effervescent granules of the present invention comprise solid surfactant particles, the surfactant being sufficiently solid in its isolated state such that it is pourable. See page 6, lines 15 – 19 of the specification. The granules are substantially free of alkyl benzene sulphonate surfactants, because of their hygroscopicity. See page 7, lines 6 - 8 of the specification.

Reading applicants' examples (p. 14) makes clear that the premixed particles become coated with liquid binder and are then shaped at low pressure to make the granule. The key point is that the processing should not destroy the surfactant particles. Applicants' claim makes clear that the surfactant must be present as particles in the granule. In this state it will NOT be functioning significantly as a binder.

Tadsen discloses a special dry neutralisation process. Any evolution of carbon dioxide occurs during the manufacturing process well away from water and even if the particulate surfactants do survive this process there is no acid left to give any

effervescence when the product is eventually used for washing. It is clear that Tadsen selects his alkyl sulfate particle size for reasons linked to the process itself - see col 7 lines 50-65. Thus, one of ordinary skill in the art is not going to use Tadsen's teaching about particle size as useful information for the particle size to use in an effervescent granule. Tadsen makes specific sized particles for his (dry) process.

The lowest level of effervescent granule used by Spadoni is 4wt% in example N. Here the effervescent granule has no binder. Spadoni never uses a binder (PEG) and surfactant in the same granule. The examiner refers to the Abstract. In the abstract reference is made to an effervescence index. Applicants' process would give an effervescence index that is too low. Applicants use the surfactant particles to "boost" the effervescence by foaming. Applicants' coating of all the particles with binder would mean that they are not in contact with one another. The equation on page 11 of Spadoni has a term $NC_{sub.inter}$ and, if we have understood this correctly, it will always be zero in applicants' granules. Thus the index will be a pure function of the quantities of the materials and thus minimised. Since Spadoni is specifically teaching NOT to do this it is wrong to use Spadoni as a starting point for our invention.

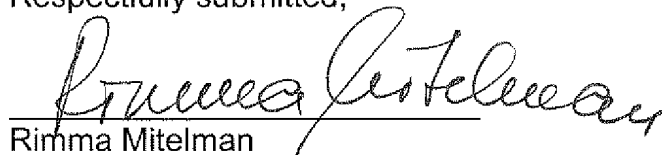
Spadoni creates direct contact between the acid and alkali by use of pressure. The pressure is applied to a free flowing powder (page 9). Contrast this with applicants' mixture with binder which is "a wetted mixture" - page 15. When Spadoni squeezes his powder the effervescent particles are apparently still identifiable (page 9 near the end). By implication any surfactant or other binder has been squashed and would not have survived as a particle of the sort applicants' define. Probably because of this squashing process the granule produced by Spadoni is not very efficient, hence the higher levels he uses in his examples (the minimum level of inclusion for LAS is 10wt% in the composition (examples 9 and A)).

All of the listed binders on page 8 of Spadoni are solid at room temperature. This is consistent with the process description on page 9 where after addition of the binder the raw materials form a dry-free flowing mixture. Applicants, however, form a wetted sticky mixture.

In light of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully requested that the application as amended be allowed to issue.

If a telephone conversation would be of assistance in advancing the prosecution of the present application, applicants' undersigned attorney invites the Examiner to telephone at the number provided.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Rimma Mitelman", is written over a horizontal line.

Rimma Mitelman
Registration No. 34,396
Attorney for Applicant(s)

RM/sa
201-894-2671